

clearly understand the values and principles that make us who we are. The truth is no one will fight long, either literally or figuratively, for values and principles he doesn't understand.

Americans must know what is worth fighting for, must maintain the willpower to do it, and must apply the lessons of our past to our current threats. So we must find a way to help students understand the values and the principles upon which our Nation is founded. The solution begins at a fundamental level of learning and education. Our students need textbooks that capture the life of history—Bill Bennett suggests a national contest for better history textbooks—and draw young people to the study of our Nation's story.

The solution, however, must go beyond changes to curriculum. As a nation, we must learn to embrace our history again and discard the politically correct, relativistic version of our history that has persisted for far too long. We must act now to preserve for future generations what we know to be so important. Let us get about the job.

Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HOUSING CRISIS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, over the last year, Americans across the country have watched as our economy has faltered, and for far too many families the economic downturn has hit home in the form of a foreclosure. This is a time when we badly need a strong and effective response from the administration led, in part, by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

But instead of helping the millions of families who are struggling to stay above water, HUD has been almost constantly distracted by the ethical questions that have been facing its Secretary, Alphonso Jackson. Ten days ago, I felt the problem had reached a breaking point, so I called for Secretary Jackson's resignation. Today, Mr. Jackson announced he has decided to move on, and President Bush must now nominate a new Housing Secretary with the experience and the credibility to attack this crisis rather than hide from it.

Mr. President, I hope this development is a sign that the administration wants to finally make the needs of American families a priority. I hope it is a sign that the administration wants to work with Congress on a meaningful response to the crisis that has swept across this Nation. I hope President Bush will change his position and sup-

port our effort to pass legislation that will help millions of families who are facing foreclosure today.

This week, we will give President Bush and the Republican Senators that chance again as we take up the Foreclosure Prevention Act for the second time this year. Until now, it seems that some on the other side of the aisle have been more responsive to Wall Street than Main Street.

So I hope my colleagues who were home over the break have listened, as I have, to the concerns of their constituents and have now returned ready to work and address our Nation's housing crisis. This truly is a crisis. I wish to spend a couple minutes talking about why we have to take action now.

As many as 2 million American families are going to lose their homes to foreclosure this year. Each foreclosure represents a family whose dream of a comfortable home and secure future has been dashed. Each foreclosure weakens the foundation of our entire economy and our communities. Foreclosures have left our neighborhoods full of vacant homes. Foreclosures have left our families distressed and troubled, and communities are now reporting a higher crime rate as a result of this crisis. State and local governments are seeing their tax revenues drop even as their needs are piling up. We in Congress can help prevent this by investing in our communities and providing support for families who risk losing everything.

The Foreclosure Prevention Act would make changes in bankruptcy laws so that more financially troubled families could keep their homes. It would change lending laws to prevent more borrowers from accepting terms they don't understand and cannot afford. It would provide an additional \$200 million to help housing counselors continue to reach out to families who are at risk of foreclosure.

I wish to focus on the last point because it is extremely important. Too many homeowners today don't know they can get help when they get behind on their mortgage. Too many of them don't contact their lender when they miss their first payment. Too many are just intimidated or don't feel they can trust anyone. The Foreclosure Prevention Act would give counseling agencies the resources they need to reach out and let borrowers know they have options. Counseling can help families negotiate with their lenders, readjust their payments, or learn how to budget their expenses better.

Last month, I had the opportunity to meet a single mother from Ohio. She had fallen on hard times which, in turn, led her to fall behind in her mortgage. Luckily, with housing counseling made possible by NeighborWorks America, she and her children were able to stay in their home. She explained to me that when she got behind, she was simply overwhelmed; she didn't know what to do. She said this is not something about which they teach you in school.

Our economic health in this country depends on Americans having a safe and stable place to live and raise their families. We want every family to know there is help out there. The Foreclosure Prevention Act would help make sure families that risk losing everything get the help they need before it is too late.

Across this country, people are worried about whether they are going to be able to keep their homes, whether their jobs will be eliminated, and how they are going to pay for health care when they or their children get sick. These are real families, and these are real communities in need of help.

We need to pass this reform immediately. Americans want action. We wanted to pass it last month, and we were stopped by Republican efforts to block this bill. So I hope now, as we have returned from the recess, President Bush and our Republican colleagues will support our efforts. I hope they will come with us tomorrow, stand with us, and pass meaningful reform that will give homeowners the help they need, allow them to keep their homes, give their families hope, and ultimately make our communities strong again.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for as long as I may need.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, many of my fellow Americans are very aware of the exhilaration but also the dangers and risks of commercial fishing in Alaska's Bering Sea. The pictures and the stories—and even the sounds—are brought into our living rooms every week on the Discovery Channel program "The Deadliest Catch." Many have seen it.

When the Bering Sea fishing fleet finds itself in trouble, they rely on the men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard to truly make order from the chaos. These stories have not escaped Hollywood's attention. It is not only seen on "The Deadliest Catch," but there was a 2006 feature film, "The Guardian," starring Kevin Costner and Ashton Kutcher, which paid tribute to the Coast Guard search and rescue teams based at Air Station Kodiak in Alaska. Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak is home to aircrews and rescue swimmers who endure some of the